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# Lamorinda Schools

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## Orinda School District Proposes Parcel Tax for March Ballot

By Jean Follmer

Due to an immediate funding need in the Orinda Union School District, the School Board has proposed a parcel tax measure for a March, 2009 ballot. The proposed tax would be an increase to the current parcel tax which was passed in March, 2003 – nearly 6 years ago. California state budget cuts had a \$700,000 impact on Orinda's budget last year and the number is projected to be much worse for next year.

In August the district canvassed the Orinda community to determine the level of support for a new parcel tax measure. They determined an amount somewhere in the vicinity of \$100 would pass. Since Proposition 13 requires that parcel taxes pass with a 2/3 majority vote, the Board has to be sure to ask for an amount it can actually get.

The Orinda School Board held a special session on October 27 to review the proposed parcel tax. "The parcel tax pays for the teachers' salaries. We want to pay to keep these great teachers. We're not talking about something special and nice for enrichment. We're talking about operating our schools," said Board Member Glenn Alper. Orinda hopes to keep its teachers' salaries competitive. "If we cannot supplement salaries with parcel tax

revenue we lose competitiveness with surrounding districts. We are now slipping behind the regional average," said Board President Riki Sorenson. "We've lost programs in the past 1 1/2 years and getting them back is even harder," said Board Member Pat Rudebusch. After some discussion about exactly when the measure should appear on the ballot, the Board agreed to move forward with March. The Board met again on November 3.

Preliminary indications are that the measure will seek to raise the current parcel tax of \$385 by \$120 to \$505. "When we met (on November 3) we were able to agree that we would continue on our course to get a new parcel tax on the ballot for March. The tax would resemble the current tax in being a flat tax (no escalator), with a low-income senior exemption. The current parcel tax amount would be bumped up by \$120 (from \$385 to \$505), but the \$120 figure may change after further discussion (at the upcoming November 17 board meeting)," said Sorenson.

Although many Bay Area communities (including Lafayette) have passed parcel taxes that include inflationary factors, the Orinda School Board believes an escalator could reduce the chances of passing the vital measure. In

March, 2002, the Orinda schools suffered a parcel tax defeat when an inflation adjustment was included in the measure. Orinda passed the current parcel tax of \$385 passed a year later as a flat tax.

If the Orinda School Board is not successful in passing the parcel tax measure, they expect a significant impact in the classroom next year. "A parcel tax would help us get through this crisis without a severe impact on core classroom programs. There is nothing left to trim from our budget except in the core classrooms. There is nothing left to trim because EFO (Education Foundation of Orinda) and Parents Club have assumed responsibility for paying for programs that we have already cut including art, music, P.E., library and classroom assistants – none of those programs are part of the OUSD budget anymore," said Sorenson.

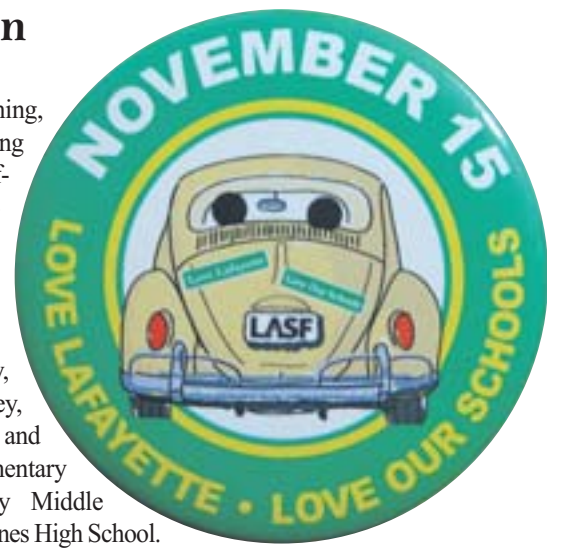
The School Board was waiting to see how other Bay Area parcel tax measures did in the November 4 election given the current economy. "I'm told that eleven out of fourteen in the greater Bay Area passed," said Sorenson. The Board is currently working to establish the leadership team for the parcel tax campaign and will reconvene on November 17 at 1:00 pm.

## LASF Party on the Horizon

By Cathy Tyson

Academic supporters will flock for the first time to the Orinda Country Club for the Lafayette Art and Science Foundation's "Love Lafayette, Love Education" party on November 15, 2008. This year it's a group effort with parent clubs and PTA's working together to reach the community's fundraising goals. "This is an especially important year for our event with the massive state budget problems," said Darci Chan, president of LASF. A big turnout is expected for

appetizers, gaming, live music, dancing and numerous raffles. All the proceeds, less expenses, fund LASF arts and science programs at Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette, and Springhill Elementary Schools, Stanley Middle School and Acalanes High School.



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## Town Hall Theatre

### Teams with OIS and Stanley in Fall Productions

By Jean Follmer



Clive Worsley working with actors at OIS

Photo submitted

It's time to put down the Lamorinda Weekly and head to Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) or Stanley Middle School for a spectacular fall production. Town Hall Theatre of Lafayette has teamed with OIS and Stanley for the first time.

#### OIS Production

The Bulldog Theatre Company is presenting "Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Clackervilles" beginning today, November 12 and running through November 15. The production is based on the book by Craig Sodaro. Clive Worsley of Town Hall Theatre directs sixty OIS students in this comedic spoof. Clive said he and his producer, Kathy Simon, chose a comedy as a result of feedback from both the community and the actors. They all expressed an interest in something beyond the recent productions of "Peter Pan", "Snow White" and "Beauty and the Beast." Having comic scenes throughout the play has been a change for many of the actors. "It's been great to see the kids grow. There is usually comic relief (in a fairy tale) that is driving

toward more of a moral of a story," said Worsley, who has worked at OIS for about seven years through his affiliation with the California Shakespeare Theatre. The benefits of participation extend well beyond gaining experience in a new acting genre. "The elements of self-control, fairness, teamwork and the benefits of passive learning are all evident," said OIS parent DD Felton. Felton's daughter, Kela, is participating in the production. "Acting is a way for you to branch out from the crowd. Clive is a great role model and person to look up to," said Kela Felton. Show times are: November 12 at 5:00, November 13 at 5:00, November 14 at 5:00 and 8:00, November 15 at 3:00 and 7:00 at the Orinda Intermediate School Theatre.

#### Stanley Production

Stanley Middle School is presenting a musical titled "A Magical Journey." The musical is directed by Emily Garcia of Town Hall Theatre. "A Magical Journey is a series of musical numbers that takes us on a trip through the ups and downs of

pursuing our dreams. It begins with the inspiration to take that first step, moves on to the journey, then finding love, loss and ultimately coming back to what's important – friendship," said Garcia. The production includes many popular Broadway songs like "Magic to Do" from Pippin, "Can't Stop the Beat" from Hairspray and "All That Jazz" from Chicago. "I put together the musical review myself. I took a high level journey to relate to the middle school experience," said Garcia. At the beginning of the production, Garcia asked all of the students to share their middle school experiences and feelings in writing. Many of them will be shared during narrations throughout the production. Garcia said the narration will range from one student's love of nachos to another's love of family. "It makes it more personal that they're reading their own words. This is a great opportunity for all performers to have their moment to shine," said Garcia. Showtimes are: November 13 at 6:00 and 8:00 and November 14 at 6:00 and 8:00.



Stanley Wildcats on Stage presents: A Magical Journey, Back Row Left to Right: Georgia Jansky, Brendan O'Donnell, Scott McCormick, Front Row: Blair Howard, Daphne Ford, Angela Falk Photo submitted

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